

North Carolina Air National Guard

TGIF News

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(The Guard is Family)



The First Annual American Military Spouse Award

Procter & Gamble Military Markets proudly sponsors the First Annual American Military Spouse Award. You may nominate any military spouse you know to receive the award. The award recipients will also receive paid travel accommodations to Beverly Hills, CA to accept their awards at the taping of the American Veteran Awards show that will be aired on The History Channel and AFN.

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The American Military Spouse Award will be an ongoing, annual award and open to all military families. There will be four (4) award recipients in the following categories:

- Spouse of a U.S. Active Duty military member
- Spouse of a U.S. Guard/Reserve military member
- Spouse of a U.S. military Veteran (served less than 20 years)
- Spouse of a U.S. military Retiree (served 20 years or more)

Go to <http://www.MilitaryShoppers.com>, click on the American Spouse Award Banner.

Selection Criteria Includes (but not limited to):

- Nominee demonstrates exceptional volunteer work accomplishments
- Exhibits selfless giving to others in the community
- Exudes ongoing strength during lengthy deployments, family separations
- Fortitude in generating support of other military spouses and their families

Nomination forms are available on line. Please complete and either fax form, including a 500 word essay, to 1-310-395-1293 or send your nomination in by mail to 12021 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 630, Los Angeles, CA 90025

Department of Defense Joint Readiness New Deployment Connections Web Site

Great Web site: www.deploymentconnections.org

The Deployment Connections application focus is on the delivery of Deployment related information and services to Active and Reserve personnel, and their family members. Program Managers, Command Leaders and other content contributors are positioned to utilize an easy to use content management system that enables distributed content submission in a secure environment.

A new (free) patriotic song

Here is a new and free patriotic song from Bob Bennett with printable lyrics that is really nice. Please share with those who may appreciate it! It's written by a father about his son being overseas, very touching. <http://www.bob-bennett.com/>

The Military Child in Transition and Deployment

www.militarystudent.org. The website was created by the Military Child in Transition and Deployment section of the Pentagon's Educational Opportunities Directorate. It is designed to make life easier for school-age children of military parents and is broken down into two age groups (6-12 & 13 and older). The website also has sections that are for parents, military leaders and educators.

Fisher House Distributing 'Gifts From the Homefront'

Fisher House has agreed to distribute "Certifichecks" to wounded military personnel through its programs supporting military hospitals. The organization is joining forces with the Army and Air Force Exchange Service to help Americans contribute to the morale and well-being of service members serving in operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, officials said. "Gifts from the Homefront" gift certificates are redeemable for merchandise at all AAFES post and base exchanges, including the more than 40 stores throughout Southwest Asia. "Gifts From the Homefront" can be purchased by anyone with a U.S. credit card or check, but only authorized AAFES customers can redeem them at base or post exchanges. The standard cost for the certificates is \$4.95 per order, which covers the costs for printing, mailing and handling of up to 20 certificates per order to a single address. Delivery takes four to 10 days, possibly longer if going overseas. Shipping and handling charges are slightly higher for bulk orders of \$300 or more. For more details, see http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct2003/n10072003_200310076.html

“A Year Without Dad” by Jodi Brunson

“*A Year Without Dad*” is an engaging, true story told from the narrative perspective of Ryan, the young son of the author, Jodi Brunson, in a way all military children will relate to. The book follows a year in the life of Ryan, and his young sister Anna, during the time their own father served active duty with the military. The story clearly shows the closeness of Ryan and his Dad before, during, and after deployment. The lyrical writing and vivid illustrations moves smoothly through each season, giving children a clear picture of how long a year is and how long the deployment of a parent might feel like.

Military children will learn three important lessons from reading “*A Year Without Dad*”:

#1- The value of communication and keeping in touch, even though the parent may be far away, via:

- E-mails
- Letters and artwork
- Video tele-conferencing
- Telephone calls

#2- The importance of keeping busy and carrying on with normal activities while the deployed parent is away by:

- Helping at home with the chores the missing parent may have done
- Involving the child’s school and community by sending letters to the soldiers and making “Welcome Home” posters for the homecoming parade
- Continuing to celebrate the holidays and birthdays, keeping the family traditions of the years before - allowing the military child a sense of stability
- Participating in a **Family readiness and support group**, which allows for the following:

- Sharing critical information
- Allowing playtime with other children who also have a deployed parent
- Organizing events, parties and a homecoming parade

#3- The reasons for children to anticipate the homecoming of their parent. Every child reading “*A Year Without Dad*” will be reminded that time will pass eventually and the missing parent will return soon.

The author wrote this book to be a comfort to her own children the year her husband served active duty overseas. Her hope is that all military children will have the opportunity to read her book and see that there are other children, like themselves, living in similar circumstances. She dedicates her story to all the families of the members of the Armed Forces, for they too serve their country through the sacrifices that they make while their loved one is away.

"A Year Without Dad" Book price \$10.00 each plus \$4.95 S&H

Ithaca Press
3 Kimberly Drive, Suite B
Dryden, New York 13053 USA
www.IthacaPress.com
(607) 273-2870

or order at
www.JodiBrunson.com

It Takes Three Legs To Make The Guard a Stable Force

By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell, National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, VA. - Transforming National Guard headquarters into joint force organizations may be the right thing to do for America, but taking care of the people is even more critical to the Guard's future, according to the chief of the National Guard Bureau.

"What we are is not about machines. It's about people. That's our most precious resource," said LTG H Steven Blum about this country's 460,000 Army and Air Guard members as well as the people who support them.

Blum compares the National Guard to a stool with three legs. "One leg is the service members. The second leg is their families. The third leg for the traditional soldiers and airmen is the employers," he explained during a recent interview.

"Those legs must be in balance if we're going to have a solid, strong stool," he added. "If any of those legs weaken in strength or change in length, the structural integrity of the stool is threatened," Blum continued. "We can only have a viable, ready, reliable, capable and accessible National Guard if all three of those factors stay in balance."

That has been his message since the U.S. Senate confirmed his presidential appointment as the Guard Bureau's 25th chief last April. "Seven out of 10 members of the National Guard today are married," Blum told the Guard Bureau's joint staff during a May town meeting in Arlington, Va.

"So when you're talking about a Guard member now, you're talking about that member's family." That is in keeping with a common philosophy that this country's military leaders, including Blum, have understood for many years. The services may recruit individuals, but they have to retain families, the leaders have acknowledged.

"Some of these programs like Family Support are readiness issues," Blum insisted. "They're just as important as having Humvees. They're just as important as having the latest model of equipment."

Keeping the civilian employers in the National Guard's corner is also critical, said Blum, who has created full-time positions for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve coordinators in each of the 54 states and territories. "It's important that we take some of the employers out to see what these National Guard men and women are actually doing when they're serving their nation," Blum said.

"Once employers see the enormous amount of commitment, dedication and discipline that's applied to accomplishing missions around the world, I think they recognize the value, even though it's painful for them, to allow these deployments to continue.

"And I think it will only enhance the employees in the eyes of the employers." Added Blum: "That makes that leg of the stool even stronger and more reliable."

Packages for Christmas

By Sgt. 1st Class Doug Sample , American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Oct. 7, 2003 — If you want make sure your holiday packages arrive to service members overseas on time, mail them by Nov. 13 and mail Priority and First-Class Letters or Cards by Dec. 11. Otherwise, your package could very well be on the proverbial “slow boat to China,” said Mark DeDomenic, chief of postal operations for the Military Postal Service Agency. Military postal operations employees ship about 250,000 pounds of mail each day to Iraq. That number is expected to go up to about 325,000 pounds each day during the year-end holiday season, which is why DeDomenic suggests that people mail holiday packages early. “Mailing early is the best way to ensure that mail gets through the pipeline and to its destination on time,” he said.

Those dates also should be observed when sending mail from most overseas locations to the United States as well, DeDomenic said. Other tips for faster delivery include mailing smaller packages. “The smaller the package, the easier it is to handle, the quicker we can move it,” DeDomenic said. “Shoe box-sized packages are perfect.” Because packages going to an APO or FPO address will require a U.S. Customs label, DeDomenic said, senders should be specific about what is inside the package. “People tend to like to put on the customs label ‘Gifts,’” he said. “This is very vague and that is the type of thing that will slow mail down. We must know exactly what is in those boxes to ensure that they are mailable items.” Although some service members move from place to place, DeDomenic said customers should mail packages to the recipient’s most recent known address. Although in most places mail will reach its destination in a timely manner, troops on the move often mean that mail will have to be forwarded. “The packages will catch up, but sometimes it may take a little longer,” he said.

It’s a good idea to place a copy of the address inside the package, just in case the address label or package gets damaged. “That way, the package can be rewrapped and sent to the correct address,” he said. To ensure packages arrive safely, DeDomenic suggested using strong, sturdy boxes with lots of wrapping. He said boxes should be packed tightly, using packing materials such as popcorn or newspapers, to keep contents from moving. He also recommended that senders use good tape, because the humidity in the desert tends to destroy tape’s adhesive qualities. “Masking tape is a definite ‘no’ when it comes to mailing, and (light-duty transparent tape) is terrible,” he said. “Reinforced nylon tape works very well.”

It’s also important to remember what can’t be mailed, DeDomenic said. Hazardous materials, firearms and flammable liquids are prohibited inside packages. This includes alcoholic beverages and even some perfumes that may have a high alcohol content, he said. Also he advises not to install batteries inside the electronic items that require them. “Things tend to get turned on (from jostling during shipping), and that causes security concerns,” he said. Because of security restrictions, mass-mailing operations such as “Operation Dear Abby” or “Any Service Member” cannot be supported by the agency this year using traditional mail, DeDomenic said. “We ask that the American public use electronic Web sites or send greeting cards via e-mail” as alternatives, he said.

TRICARE

Important
Telephone Numbers

TRICARE FOR LIFE
1-888-363-5433

PHARMACY
1-877-363-6337

**NATIONAL MAIL
ORDER PHARMACY**
1-866-363-8667

**TRICARE
PRIME REMOTE**
1-888-363-2273

TRICARE DENTAL
1-888-622-2256 (Enrollment)
1-800-866-8499 (Information)

**REGION 1
NORTH EAST**
1-888-999-5195

**REGION 2
MID - ATLANTIC**
1-800-931-9501

**REGION 3
SOUTHEAST**
1-800-444-5445

**REGION 4
GULF SOUTH**
1-800-444-5445

**REGION 5
HEARTLAND**
1-800-941-4501

**REGION 6
SOUTHWEST**
1-800-406-2832

**REGION 7/8
CENTRAL**
1-888-874-9378

**REGION 9
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**
1-800-242-6788

**REGION 10
GOLDEN GATE**
1-800-242-6788

**REGION 11
NORTHWEST**
1-800-404-4506

TRICARE: A Back-to-School Basic For Your College Student

September 9, 2003, No. 03-20

As you prepare your college-age child for this new school year, if he/she is moving from your home region, be sure to put TRICARE coverage or enrollment changes on your to-do list. Your child may continue to be TRICARE eligible as long as he or she is a full-time student until his/her 23rd birthday. Your first assignment is to research which TRICARE option, Prime, Extra or Standard, may be best for your child.

TRICARE Prime, a popular choice among military families, may or may not be the best choice for your college-bound son or daughter, depending on individual health care needs and location. A beneficiary counseling and assistance coordinator (BCAC) at your local military treatment facility (MTF), or a TRICARE service center (TSC) representative can help you decide what may be best. To reach a TSC, call the toll-free telephone number for TRICARE in your region. (NOTE: Online directory of TRICARE toll-free numbers is available at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil>)

As a full-time student, your son or daughter may need to transfer TRICARE enrollment to the TRICARE region in which the school is located. If your child's college or university is located in an area where TRICARE Prime is offered, he or she may continue TRICARE Prime coverage. Split enrollment gives you the opportunity to have your child enrolled in one region while the rest of your family lives and may be enrolled in a different region. To transfer or change your child's TRICARE Prime enrollment, the sponsor must complete and sign an enrollment application or change request form and send it to the regional managed care support contractor in your child's new region. Your child will have continuous TRICARE Prime coverage while traveling from one region to another where TRICARE Prime is available. Your child should stay enrolled in your home region until he or she arrives in the new region. The transfer from the old region to the new one is effective the date the transfer request is received by the contractor in the new region.

If you are a retiree family and your family enrollment fees are current, no additional fees are due when your child transfers his or her enrollment to another region. Your child will be allowed two transfers per year between TRICARE regions, as long as the second transfer is back to the region of the original enrollment.

If you are an active duty family, you may transfer your child's enrollment as often as necessary. Your student's enrollment in TRICARE Prime will automatically be renewed at the end of the one-year enrollment period unless you decline the renewal offer.

If you must disenroll your child from TRICARE Prime because of a move to a location where Prime is not offered, he or she is not locked out of future TRICARE Prime enrollment. However, disenrollment should be done immediately to avoid paying higher costs under TRICARE Prime's point-of-service (POS) option. POS charges are the charges beneficiaries may incur if they receive care without proper authorization from their TRICARE Prime primary care manager (PCM). Additional information on POS charges is available at http://www.tricare.osd.mil/factsheets/index.cfm?fx=showfs&file_name=POS%2Ehtm

You also have the option of purchasing a TRICARE supplement (secondary to TRICARE) or student health insurance (primary to TRICARE) if your child's school offers it. While the basic TRICARE benefit is the same throughout the TRICARE regions, there may be some differences in authorization or referral procedures required by the TRICARE contractor in your child's new region. A BCAC at the local MTF where your child will be enrolled, or the local TSC can help your child with any questions that may arise. If you have a child going to college this year, be sure you understand the rules in the new TRICARE region pertaining to pre- authorization for care.

For more information about split enrollment, transferring enrollment, other TRICARE options and regional contact information, please visit our Web site at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil> or contact your health benefits adviser in your local TRICARE region. For more information on student eligibility requirements, contact DEERS at 1-800-538-9552, your local military ID card issuing office, or visit <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/deers/default.cfm>

(NOTE: An online Beneficiary Counseling and Assistance Coordinator (BCAC) Directory is available at <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/bcacdirectory.cfm>)

New and Improved TRICARE Web Site Features Enhanced Search Engine

The Health Affairs (HA) and TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) Web sites are now consolidated into one resource for the Military Health System. There are three portals to access the new site: the Military Health System portal (www.ha.osd.mil) contains HA and TMA information; the TRICARE Beneficiary portal (www.tricare.osd.mil) contains TRICARE beneficiary information; and the TRICARE Provider portal (www.tricare.osd.mil/provider.cfm) contains links for provider certification as well as other provider information. As part of the HA/TMA consolidated Web site offers enhanced search capabilities, including new search options.

Household Products Database Health and Safety Information on Household Products

We sometimes think of the products that hurt us as those we work with, when we really need to be more proactive at home. <http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov/>

What's under your kitchen sink, in your garage, in your bathroom, and on the shelves in your laundry room? Do these household products pose a potential health risk to you and your family? Find out what's in these products and what are the potential health effects, and other safety and handling information.

TRICARE states new prescription drug mail policy for overseas

Military retirees living overseas, who are eligible to receive mail through the Military Postal Service, can now receive prescription drug shipments larger than 16 ounces. Contracted suppliers for the Tri-Care Mail Order Pharmacy (TMOP) program can mail a 90-day supply of prescription drugs, due to the exception to policy that would otherwise limit the weight of the packages.

This Military Postal System exception to policy, which was implemented May 21, is limited to prescription medication shipments, and no other suppliers or programs are authorized under this policy.

Scripts, Inc., is TMOP. That company is contract to the as the sole prescription drugs Previously, such multiple packages 16 ounces.

For additional TMOP program, go to <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy/tmop.cfm>.



Currently, Express- the only authorized contracted supplier. under a five-year Department of Defense supplier for under that program. shipments had to be in each weighing less than

information on the

TRICARE Important Telephone Numbers

TRICARE Pacific

Alaska & Hawaii
800-242-6788

WESTPAC
888-777-8343

Latin America &
Canada
888-777-8343

Puerto Rico &
Virgin Islands
888-777-8343

Europe
888-777-8343

Family Readiness Air Guard Expanded Executive Council

Fisk Outwater - Chairman
Kathleen Flaherty
Terry Henderson
Janice Richardson
Deborah Dunlap - Recognition Committee
Martha Pasour - Youth Committee
Sarah Spivey - Youth Committee

Family Readiness office telephone numbers

- “ 704-398- 4949
- “ Cell Phone: 980-721-4019
- DSN: 231-4239

The fastest way to get in touch with FR is now through the cell phone or pager, someone will answer or get back in touch with you as quickly as possible

Emergency contact calls:

- “ Pager: 1-800-250-4181

*Uniting Our Air Guard
One Family at a Time*



Family Readiness
5225 Morris Field Drive
Charlotte, NC 28208

Phone: 1-800-354-6943 Ext 4949
Cell Phone: 980-721-4019

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.ncchar.ang.af.mil

Family Readiness

Charter

Develop a program to provide information, on-going education, and assistance to families, members, and leadership aimed at preparing military members and their families for National Guard Military Life

Mission

Educate, Support, Assist, Communicate, Collaborate, and Sustain